

June 22nd, 2007

Dear Representative:

The undersigned organizations support comprehensive legislative efforts to manage the critical shortage of primary care providers in America. We strongly support the High-Need Physician Workforce Incentives Act of 2007 introduced by Representatives Michael Burgess (TX) and Henry Cuellar (TX). This bill would help reverse the decline of physicians entering into primary care practice, as well as assist in the retention of those physicians already practicing in the field – particularly in high need areas throughout the nation. H.R. 2584 would accomplish these important goals through a combination of direct funding and loan forgiveness programs.

The bill provides incentives to medical students, and new doctors, by creating scholarship and loan repayment programs for primary care physicians who agree to practice in high-need areas. Currently, the average medical school graduate enters the workforce with just over \$130,000 of debt. Due to inadequate compensation for primary care physicians, working off these enormous debts can take years. Medical school debt provides a strong incentive for students to enter into the more lucrative specialty care market, adding to the current shortage of primary care providers. By providing medical students and new doctors with scholarships and loan forgiveness, the bill serves to provide incentives for new primary care physicians and to attract their talents to the areas where they are most needed by the community.

H.R. 2584 does not stop at incentivizing new physicians; it also would create grants to help retain primary care physicians, as well as improve access to quality health care. Grants would be given to states to provide financial aid to properly support physicians in high need environments who deliver qualified patient centered, coordinated primary care. Additional grants would be provided to board certified entities to either create new or to expand existing geriatric fellowship programs.

We look forward to working with the 110th Congress on this and other issues surrounding the continued efforts to support primary care and implement medical homes. Please enact H.R. 2584 and help us build a better healthcare system.

Sincerely,

AARP
American College of Physicians
Aurum Dx
The ERISA Industry Committee
IBM
National Committee for Quality Assurance
National Retail Federation